Physical Environment

The Arc nursery premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. We provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

A Welcoming Environment

Arc Nursery aims to provide a warm and welcoming environment for children, their parents/carers and for staff members. To ensure this, we aim to:

- Prepare the Nursery rooms before the session is due to commence, including setting up activities
- Have a member of staff inside the entrance to the Nursery room to greet parents/carers and their child/children
- Have other staff members available to assist if any child is upset or distressed at being left by their parent/carer
- Display the children’s work, photos of the children and their families or home around the Nursery room displayed (where the children are able to see them)
- Ensure that the Nursery notice board in the foyer is up to date and kept in order. Notices about forthcoming events will be displayed in a prominent position for parents/carers to read. (Staff notices are located on the staff notice board.)
- Ensure a welcome sign and notices are available in other languages, if needed
- Have a display of staff photos and staff roles for clear identification
- Have a visitor’s book, ensuring all visitors sign and date before entering the building.

A Clean and Well Maintained Environment

Whilst it is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure the Nursery room and any other area used by the children and/or staff are clean and safe, there is a daily rota of cleaning tasks that ensure this is done. A cleaner is employed who cleans the building at the end of each day. Any maintenance work will be reported to the office, who will arrange for it to be dealt with promptly.

The Nursery rooms, garden, and the kitchen are the responsibility of the staff to clean and make safe, in accordance with current Health & Safety regulations. Most of these tasks are undertaken before or after each session, or daily; however, some are carried out during the session (e.g. the staff member who has prepared the snack will clean and put
away what they have used and leave the kitchen and table tidy) while still maintaining correct ratios.

All facilities used by staff members should be left clean and tidy.

All hazardous materials (e.g. cleaning fluids, medicines) are to be kept in accordance with current Health & Safety regulations, ensuring that no child can gain access to them.

**Use of premises**

The Arc nursery has sole use of the two story building with a secure ground floor garden and fenced roof garden. We operate a safe and secure environment for all the children and staff and will ensure that doors are appropriately secured at all times. A bell/intercom system is located on the outside of the entrance to the Nursery, Parents/carers are permitted to enter the foyer of the nursery and then a staff member will greet the parent/carer before accessing the playroom. Parents/carers are not permitted to let anyone in or out of the building or playrooms.

Visitors are not to be admitted to the building without management permission. Visitors must sign the visitor’s book and are not left alone while on the premises.

**Building**

The building has been adapted for use by the Nursery in accordance to all relevant planning requirements and inspected by building regulators where necessary. Ofsted will be notified of any changes made to the premises, or to their use.

**Telephone**

Arc Nursery has a direct line telephone, located within the Nursery area. This is dedicated solely to Nursery use. All parents/carers are given this telephone number, enabling them to contact us if needed. This telephone is also used by staff members to contact parent/carers, other professional services and for emergency use. Staff can also contact each other via internal calls. A list of emergency telephone numbers are located by the Nursery telephone. Emergency contact numbers for the children are kept with the room register.

Staff, Parents and visitors are not allowed to have or use their mobile phones on the premises. Staff must keep their phones in their locker and are only allowed to be used in the staff room or off the premises.

When going on visits and outings, both locally (walking) and further afield (e.g. trip to a farm accompanied by parents/carers), the nursery mobile phone, which is for the sole purpose of outings, plus the appropriate change for a payphone, will always taken by a member of staff in case of emergencies.

**Nursery room environment**

Nursery staff ensure the environment has the seven areas of learning clearly defined within the environment. Staff are aware of children’s need for independence and choice, so provide easy access to equipment to allow children to be able to help themselves. Staff
display photos of the children at activities, also the children’s work is displayed, which reaffirms the children’s creativity, participation, achievement and sense of belonging.

**Temperature**

The Nursery aims to keep the temperature of the room comfortable for both the children and staff. There are thermometers in the Nursery rooms which can be checked regularly to ensure the room is not too hot or too cold.

If the heating system fails during cold weather, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with our Crisis Management Policy. During hot weather the children are offered water to drink; however, should the temperature be above the acceptable level, action will be taken as stated in the Crisis Management Policy.

**Space**

In accordance with Ofsted requirements, there is plenty of room for the children to play, and take part in activities throughout the day. There is also a quiet area (may also incorporate the reading corner), where children can rest/sleep and an adult will supervise them.

All equipment and furniture are placed in such a way as not to restrict the free movement of the children, or cause a danger to children or staff. If it is noted during a session that there is a problem in any of these areas, a staff member will undertake to resolve the matter as appropriate. All rooms and outside areas (where appropriate) used by the Nursery will be checked by a member of staff prior to being used by the children and recorded in the daily risk assessment check list.

**Rest areas**

The rest area for the children is separated from the main area where the children play, this will minimise disruption and prevent other children being able to run in and out of the area. There will always be a member of staff monitoring the area when children are resting or sleeping. Any equipment that needs to be moved (such as the mattresses) will be done in accordance with our manual handling guidelines and at no risk to any children present. Children’s sleep pattern will be recorded.

**Storage space**

When storing any item, safety will be of greatest importance. This is to ensure that there is no risk of any item neither falling and injuring a child or an adult, nor causing an injury in trying to store an item too high.

The toys/equipment will be accessible to children where appropriate.

All hazardous items (such as cleaning fluids and medicines) will be kept in cupboards away from the children’s play area, in accordance to current guidelines.
Outdoor play area

The outdoor play area used by the children is secure. The area will be checked prior to every use. Risk assessments on the outside play area are carried out daily.

Toilet facilities

The high adult to child ratio in Nursery means that there is always a member of staff available to escort or assist a child to the toilet or potty room without affecting the required ratio. Children will only be accompanied by a qualified member of staff (with current CRB check).

Children in the Rainbow room have free access to the toilet as they are situated within the play rooms. Staff are aware of each child’s stage of development with regard to toilet training and will therefore ask or encourage the children if they need to go to the toilet.

The changing area has a glass panel

The following are necessary:

- Children may close the door, locking it if desired, while they are in the toilet. The adult member of staff will only assist if asked by the child, or if their stage of development means they require some help.

- Locks on toilet doors can be easily opened from the outside.

- Good hygiene practices are encouraged in the children, e.g. washing hands after going to the toilet. The staff member supervises this activity according to the child’s developing independence.

- Toilets are checked regularly by a member of staff to ensure cleanliness and safety. They will take any necessary action to ensure this.

- Baby wipes, disposable cloths, spare clothes and nappy sack bags are kept stocked in the toilets in case of 'accidents'. Staff check if spare clothes have been provided by parents before changing.

- Record children’s personal phrases for toilet use.

- Record for changing nappies and soiling

Staff facilities

Arc Nursery staff have access to an office to conduct private conversations. These should be arranged so as not to affect staff ratios.

Records are stored in a lockable filing cabinet in the office, which is also locked when the Nursery is not open.
Kitchen facilities

Children are prevented from entering the kitchen. The kitchen is used by staff members, who ensure it is always left clean and tidy in accordance with current Health & Safety legislation.

Laundry facilities

The laundry is sited in basement. There is a hand basin for hand washing ensuring low risk to cross contamination.

Soiled linen will be stored safely and will be transported from the relevant areas by staff members, in accordance to Health & Safety regulations regarding lifting. If the staff ratios will be affected, this duty will not be undertaken until there is sufficient staff to cover.

Safety Policy

Arc Nursery endeavours to always provide a clean and safe environment for both the children and staff and visitors. Further details of how we ensure this can be found in our Safety Policy.

Gas and Electricity

All appliances used in the provision are from reputable sources and conform to safety requirements. Proof of purchase, installation records and servicing certificates from approved contractors are kept.

Regular checks on all gas and electrical appliances will be completed by a qualified person and the date of inspection marked on a sticker on each appliance.

The safety of the children is of paramount importance, therefore access to electrical appliances is limited (e.g. a computer). All plug sockets will be covered by an approved plug protector. Leads will be kept tidy. Children cannot gain access to the electric and gas meters.

Alarms will be fitted in consultation with the Fire Prevention Officer.

Security

Arc Nursery holds the safety of the children within their care of great importance. Therefore, the design of the areas used by the children has taken security in to consideration.

There is no access to any of the areas used by children without the knowledge and agreement of senior staff members.

Staff members will be informed if there are visitors or maintenance personnel due to be on the premises and all staff, children, parents/carers and volunteers will be registered when in the provision (parent/carers will not be registered when dropping or collecting their child).

Fire doors are secure but can be opened easily in the case of an emergency (in
consultation with the Fire Prevention Officer).

Doors and windows cannot be opened by a child on their own.

All visitors to the provision will be registered in the Visitor Book.

**Procedures for collecting children at the end of their session will be adhered to (see releasing children procedure).**

**Supervision**

Arc Nursery adheres to the legal requirements regarding adult: child ratios. Children will be supervised at all times and will not be left in the sole care of an adult who has not had a criminal record check completed. The Operational Plan has taken into consideration how the ratios will be maintained at all times, including meal times, arrival and departure time and times when movement around the building is required.

All supervision will be done taking into account each child’s age, ability and need for learning independence. Sleeping children/babies will be supervised and monitored.

Outings will be supervised in accordance with our outings policy.

**Staff Ratio**

Within Arc Nursery our adult: child ratio complies with current legal requirements, as shown below, which we believe is essential in providing good quality care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 2 years olds</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 3 years olds</td>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years olds</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also employ a floating member of staff to cover holidays and sickness. This ensures we have continuity of care by people the children and families know and trust. All tasks, both involving the children and those not directly linked with them, are shown on a weekly rota. Staff are only asked to undertake those tasks for which they are qualified or feel able to undertake.

While there are duties to be undertaken by the staff during each session, there is always at least one member of staff, without allocated duties, who is available to play and interact with the children; there may also be volunteers or students present in the room. Only those members of staff with a current CRB check take children to the toilet and students and volunteers are never left alone with children.

**Outside Area**

As part of the daily risk assessment, the outdoor play area is checked for safety. The
following are considered:

- Gates and fences are secure and in good repair.
- Equipment and surfaces the children play on are suitable and safe.
- Plants are suitable for use in the play area.
- Adult: child ratios are maintained.
- Visitors cannot access the play area, nor can children exit it without permission and supervision.

**Water**

Water activities will be supervised at all times. The water in the tray will be changed regularly and safely at least once a day and (in accordance to health and safety).

**Hazardous plants**

We believe children learn a lot by being able to watch plants grow and to look after them. However, we are aware that some plants can be hazardous to children. Therefore, any plants grown in the play area, or brought in to the indoor area, will be checked for safety. A list is available, but as it is not an exhaustive one plants will be checked for safety before being planted.

Children will not be able to access the plants unsupervised and checks will be made regarding any allergies the children may have.

Reviewed June 2015